

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2017

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is statutorily required to recover about 90 percent of its budget through fees assessed to applicants and NRC licensees. Fees are collected via two methods: “Part 170” fees, which are assessed for license-specific services provided by the NRC, and “Part 171” fees, which are annual fees charged to all NRC license holders. NRC mails invoices to licensees to collect these fees.

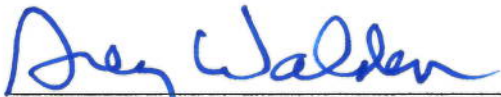
In recent years, according to information developed by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), licensees have raised concerns that NRC’s invoices lack transparency, meaning they do not contain sufficient detail to substantiate charges. One licensee pointed out that invoices lack detail and do not have clear connections to specific tasks that include time spent and costs accrued. Additionally, some licensees have voiced concerns that NRC’s activity codes are confusing to understand and do not allow a licensee to track invoiced amounts to specific activities. Due to this confusion, some licensees have reported that they are being charged multiple times for the same activity and are questioning the reliability of NRC’s billing process.

To assist the committee in its oversight of NRC’s fee-billing process and issues that may affect the billing process, we ask that GAO address the following:

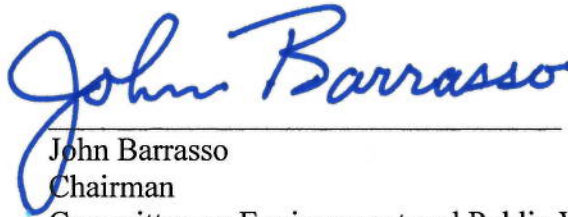
1. What is NRC’s process for billing companies for fees assessed under Parts 170 and 171?
2. To what extent does the NRC’s process provide for comparing actual fees collected against budget projections?
3. To what extent does NRC’s billing process follow federal requirements or best practices?
4. To what extent does NRC’s billing process provide reasonable assurance that the agency is charging and collecting the correct amount in its invoices?
5. What course of action can licensees take to dispute and resolve billing issues?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. Please work with Mr. Andy Zach of the House Committee on Energy & Commerce majority staff at (202) 225-2927 and Ms. Annie Caputo of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works at (202) 224-6176 on the specifics of your examination.

Sincerely,



Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives



John Barrasso
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate



Fred Upton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
U.S. House of Representatives



Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety
U.S. Senate

cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy